

leave do not take it because they just cannot afford to give up that income. New parents must not be forced to choose between taking care of their child financially and taking care of their child physically and emotionally. With the FIRST bill we are taking the first step, the step, to answering the question, "Who is taking care of our children?" For new babies, the answer will be, "Their parents."

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks, and to include extraneous material on House Resolution 293.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

SALE OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES TO TERRORIST STATES IS UNACCEPTABLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, a number of us have prepared a letter that we will be sending tomorrow, the gentleman from New York (Mr. GILMAN), chairman of the Committee on International Relations; the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ); the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROSLEHTINEN); the gentleman from Florida (Mr. WEXLER); the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTSCH); and the gentleman from Florida (Mr. MCCOLLUM). We are certain many others will sign tomorrow.

We have prepared a letter, and we are sending it to the Speaker tomorrow and it reads as follows: "Dear Mr. Speaker, we are deeply concerned about a controversial section of the Senate Agriculture Appropriations Bill which would effectively reverse a quarter century's worth of steadfast resistance to terrorism. Language inserted by Senator ASHCROFT would allow the direct sale of broadly defined agricultural commodities to terrorist States which have American blood on their hands.

"We would have thought that by now Members of Congress would understand the evil of appeasement and danger of conducting business as usual with terrorist governments. Americans continue to suffer attacks by terrorists and die worldwide, yet certain Members of Congress push for trade with and financing for terrorist States. Inclusion in the conference report of this language would underscore a basic lack of commitment to fight terrorism and open the door to broader unrestricted trade with terrorist States.

"The controversial Ashcroft language is not included in the House version of the bill. However, Senate

conferees have rejected earnest efforts to compromise and, in doing so, have needlessly made this section increasingly controversial and unacceptable.

"Mr. Speaker, there is more to America than the drive to make money at any cost. Profit from business with terrorist governments is blood money and is simply not acceptable."

Now, according to the State Department's overview of State-sponsored terrorism, the 1998, the latest version available, Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Sudan and Syria are the seven governments that the U.S. Secretary of State has designated as state sponsors of international terrorism. They would be the seven states to which, if this Senate language is passed, is accepted, we could start selling to, and financing would be permitted.

According to the State Department, and I read here, "Cuba maintains close ties to other state sponsors of terrorism and leftist insurgent groups and continues to provide safe haven to a number of international terrorists.

"Iran continues to plan and conduct terrorist attacks, including the assassination of dissidents abroad. It supports a variety of groups that use terrorism to pursue their goals, including several that opposed the Middle East Peace Process, by providing varying degrees of money, training, safe haven and weapons.

"Iraq provides safe haven to terrorists and rejectionist groups, and continues its efforts to rebuild its intelligence network, which it used previously to support international terrorism. The leader of the Abu Nidal organization may have relocated to Baghdad in late 1998."

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Libya harbors suspects in the bombing of the UTA Flight 772, although French authorities agreed to try the six in absentia. Several Middle Eastern terrorist groups continue to receive support from Libya, including the PIJ and the PFLP-GC.

North Korea, though not linked definitively to any act of international terrorism in the last couple of years, continues to provide safehaven to terrorists who highjacked a Japanese airliner to North Korea.

Sudan provides safehaven to some of the world's most violent terrorist groups, including Usama Bin Ladin's al-Qaida, and the Hezbollah, the PIJ, and the ANO and HAMAS.

The Sudanese Government also refuses to comply with the United Nations Security Council demands that it hand over for trial fugitives linked to the assassination attempt against the president of Egypt.

Syria continues to provide sanctuary and support for a number of terrorist groups that seek to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

These are the states which if that Senate language remains in the Committee on Agriculture conference re-

port, if it is included in that conference report, will be eligible for American sales and financing from the United States.

I would remind my colleagues, Mr. Speaker, that it is unreasonable, I would say naive, to assume that there will not be a cost, a political cost, as well as an ethical cost, to be paid for helping terrorists states.

The American people are not naive. The American people are not stupid. The American people are going to reject authorization of American sales and American financing to terrorist states.

I wanted tonight, Mr. Speaker, to take this opportunity to inform my colleagues and the American people through C-SPAN of the urgency of the moment so that they will get in contact immediately with their Members of Congress here in the House and tell them, reject the Ashcroft language, reject the pro-terrorism language that Senator ASHCROFT included in the Senate agricultural appropriations bill, reject the pro-terrorist state language.

The House continues to insist in that rejection. The American people need to make their opinions heard right now.

U.S.-SRI LANKA RELATIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. COOKSEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity to talk about the growing relations between the United States and Sri Lanka, relations that I hope will be getting more attention in the near future.

In particular, I wanted to mention the upcoming visits of two distinguished Sri Lankan officials to Washington, D.C., next week.

At the beginning of this year, I formed a new bipartisan congressional caucus on Sri Lanka in an effort to promote increased dialogue between our two countries and to be a voice in Congress for the approximately 100,000 Americans of Sri Lankan descent.

Formerly known as Ceylon, Sri Lanka is an independent island-nation. Its territory comprises one of the largest islands in the Indian Ocean, about the size of West Virginia, lying approximately 20 miles southeast of the southernmost tip of India.

This South Asian nation of about 18 million people, a democracy where both the president and the prime minister are women, continues to work to strengthen its relations both with other developing nations and with major industrial powers like the United States.

To that end, the president of Sri Lanka, Mrs. Kumaratunga, will be in the United States within the next few days, September 24 to 28, to attend an annual International Monetary Fund/World Bank meeting in her capacity as the chairwoman of the Group of 24 of the IMF.

On Sunday, September 26, the President will host a reception here in Washington. The Group of 24 comprises a cross-section of countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The Group of 24 seeks to address economic growth-related issues in the developing countries and to strengthen their financial and monetary situation.

Mr. Speaker, while I welcome the president coming to Washington for these important international meetings, I would like to see Sri Lanka's Head of State return to our Nation's capital for a State visit.

Earlier this year I wrote to President Clinton asking that he formally invite the president. The last presidential visit from Sri Lanka to the U.S. was in 1984. President Clinton did respond to my letter, although he did not commit to extending such an invitation. However, as South Asia continues to assume a growing importance in U.S. foreign policy considerations, I hope and I will continue to push for a State visit.

Mr. Speaker, next week Sri Lanka's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Kadirgamar, will be making an official visit to Washington. Our Sri Lankan Caucus will be setting up a briefing with our Members and our staff with the Foreign Minister tentatively scheduled for next Thursday. I look forward to a productive meeting that will expand the dialogue between our two nations.

Mr. Speaker, bilateral U.S.-Sri Lanka relations have always been strong since Sri Lanka won its independence from British colonial rule in 1948. In addition to our growing trade relations, the U.S. and Sri Lanka have a shared stake in promoting security, stability, and democracy in South Asia. Sri Lanka continues to work to promote tolerance among the various religious and ethnic communities that make up its population. It is a country that shares many of our values, and we have many common interests that must continue to be pursued.

Mr. Speaker, I hope next week's visit by Sri Lanka's president and foreign minister will contribute to this process of closer relations with the United States, and I urge my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to join me in continuing to work for closer ties between our two countries.

GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD. Mr. Speaker, I am here tonight again because we still have not passed legislation to add direction to the issue of gun violence in America.

Given that we have been plagued by gun violence in our schools across the country, to the most recent shootings involving Jewish children in Los Angeles and members of a Baptist church in

Ft. Worth, Texas, it is clear that there is an overwhelming need for gun legislation. We have an opportunity as a body to address this issue.

The juvenile justice bills from the House and Senate which are currently in conference committee can provide the American public with the action they deserve on this critical issue.

I urge my colleagues to support my bill, which would require child safety locks on handguns, a bill which would require all sellers at gun shows, flea markets, and other weapon markets to run an instant background check on every one of their purchasers, and a bill which would close the loophole in the Brady law which would prevent felons from acquiring guns. We should also raise the handgun purchase age from 18 to 21 to effectively protect our children.

Mr. Speaker, events around the country illustrate the need for these changes in our laws to be enacted. Thirteen children under the age of 19 are killed each day because of guns. In 1996 alone, 4,643 young people were killed by firearms. Guns cause one in four deaths of teenagers age 15 to 19. Firearms are the fourth leading cause of accidental death among children ages 5 to 14.

Each year gun violence is getting worse. From 1984 to 1994, the firearms homicide rate for 15- to 18-year-olds increased over 200 percent, while the non-firearm homicide death rate decreased 12.8 percent.

How many more shootings, Mr. Speaker, must occur before this body will take substantive action? How many more children must be slaughtered by guns before we pass laws to protect them? Is it necessary for every congressional district within each State to experience some traumatic, violent event before we act on the issue of gun violence?

Gun violence affects all Americans regardless of age, class, religion, or socio-economic status. Many countries around the world do not have the same level of gun violence as the United States. This is a problem that has a clear solution, legislation to stem the tide of violence that has plagued us as a Nation.

Mr. Speaker, in my State of California alone, the number of incidents of gun violence over the course of 10 years is unacceptable.

In Berkeley, Kenzo Dix was gunned down by a 14-year-old schoolmate when he was accidentally shot when the two were playing with a pistol. In Los Angeles, a 14-year-old boy was accidentally shot in the head and killed by a friend showing off his father's handgun. In Oceanside, 4-year-old Christopher David Holt unintentionally shot and killed himself with a .357 Magnum revolver he discovered in a concealed compartment at the head of his grandfather's bed.

Of the 5,000 children who die each year because of guns, which averages out to 13 per day, nearly 500 deaths are accidental.

My child safety lock act, Mr. Speaker, which I introduced in the 105th and 106th Congress, would have prohibited any person from transferring or selling a firearm in the United States unless it is sold with a child safety lock. This bill and other legislation currently in the conference committee will address this issue.

We must have the ability to cross party lines, Mr. Speaker, forget our political and ideological differences, and pass legislation to avoid the continued senseless bloodshed and loss of innocent lives around our country.

I urge my colleagues to support legislation which will create a safer environment for all Americans and preserve the future of our children.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Hawaii (Mrs. MINK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MINK of Hawaii addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HURRICANE FLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mrs. CLAYTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, two of us will be talking on the floor and maybe others will join us later on.

Mr. Speaker, according to FEMA, the route many take to visit Disney World in Orlando, Florida, is Interstate 95, and it was designed to withstand the 500-year flood and more.

When Hurricane Floyd, with its mighty wind and its rushing waters, swept through North Carolina, it caused Interstate 95 to close. Indeed, as this photo shows, and I will pass a couple of them so my colleagues can see it, Highway 301 split in two, washed away, left impassable.

In fact, initially more than 500 roads were impassable. Railroad tracks, and I think my colleagues will see that in this, railroad tracks were broken up and rendered unusable. Bridges were closed. Helicopters or boat, transportation mediums few in North Carolina, has been the only means of travel for many throughout the hurricane impacted areas.

Mr. Speaker, Hurricane Floyd left in its wake the worst flooding in the history of the State of North Carolina. And more rain fell yesterday. The people of North Carolina need help. They need help now. It is not charity they seek but a chance, a chance to recover, a chance to restore, a chance to rebuild, a chance to put their lives back on track. It is the kind of a chance that we as Americans afford each other when tragedy of this magnitude strikes.

At least 42 persons are known dead. Many more are unaccountable for, still missing. The Tar, Neuse, Cape Fear, and Lumber Rivers are all above flood